Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

August 1992

UFMCC Seeks to Send Chaplains to US Military

UFMCC has asked the Pentagon to allow its ministers to serve as military chaplains. The action was announced July 2 in conjunction with the Freedom Rally held in Dallas, TX.

UFMCC has asked the U.S. Defense Department to recognize UFMCC as a religious body that may endorse its clergy to become military chaplains. Rev. Dusty Pruitt, pastor of MCC Long Beach, CA, will be UFMCC's first applicant endorsed for appointment as a chaplain. If accepted, Rev. Pruitt will serve as a chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserves. She has sued the Army for discharging her in 1986 after she said publicly that she is a lesbian.

"We're here to serve notice to the military that we're entering a new phase of our fight," Rev. Elder Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator, said at a press conference in Dallas.

If the Pentagon refuses to assign UFMCC chaplains, Rev. Perry said the denomination will call upon several attorneys who have offered their services for free. "We are prepared to take it to the Supreme Court if necessary," he said.

In addition, UFMCC called upon the Defense Department to reverse its policy excluding gay and lesbian personnel from the U.S. armed forces.

"We confront this unjust policy as a matter of religious freedom," Rev. Elder Don Eastman said. "We see homosexuality as a natural variation within God's created order. It is part of the diversity to be accepted within our pluralistic society." ❐

Atlanta Chosen for 1995

General Council voted to hold the 1995 General Conference in Atlanta, GA.

The General Council vote was taken in June by mail-in ballot. UFMCC has secured a contract with the Westin Peachtree in Atlanta.

This will be the second General Conference to be held in Atlanta. In 1973, the first General Conference to be held outside of California was convened in Atlanta. Rev. Jay Neely, Gulf Lower Atlantic District Coordinator, describes the city as "very lesbian/gay positive."

In choosing a conference site, concern was expressed about the restrictive U.S. policies on allowing people with AIDS into the country. Fellowship and district leaders said they will continue to bring pressure on government policy makers to eliminate these restrictions. ❐

***Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebrations** in Washington, DC, featured the music of HeartSong, a full-time traveling evangelistic ministry from Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX. HeartSong is pictured during the Pride festivities with Miss Gay Pride and the District of Columbia Pride President. For more Pride Day highlights, please see page 4.*

Freedom Rally Draws 1,000

July Fourth became a day of expectation as MCC pastors in the Dallas, TX, area prepared for UFMCC's first mass Rally to be conducted by Rev. Elder Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator.

Those pastors are Rev. Jo Crisco, pastor of Trinity MCC of Arlington; Rev. Michael Piazza, pastor of Cathedral of Hope MCC of Dallas; Rev. Colleen Darraugh, pastor of Harvest MCC of Denton; and Rev. Brenda Hunt, pastor of Agape MCC of Fort Worth. The churches had already met over a five-month period planning the Rally with Rev. Elder Don Eastman. Rev. Paul Tucker of the Dallas church had been named as the local coordinator and had overseen the different committees that would operate to make the Rally a success.

By the time the doors of the Majestic Theater in downtown Dallas opened, numbers of people were waiting outside the theater. The theme for the Rally was "Celebrate Our Freedom," honoring gay and lesbian veterans. At 7:45 the 40-piece Oak Lawn Band celebrated the Fourth of July anniversary of the U.S.A.'s birth with 15 minutes of patriotic music.

(see Freedom Rally, page 4)

27 New Clergy Licensed

Congratulations to the following people, who receive initial licensing as UFMCC clergy as of August 1.

Australian District
John Fowler
Eastern Canadian District
Marcia Perryman
European North Sea District
Andy Braunston
Great Lakes District
Daniel K. Brauer
Gulf Lower Atlantic District
Nancy K. Brown
Maurice K. Hinson
Wayne Lindsey
Mid-Central District
Lee P. Campbell
Brian J. Hanlon
James M. Martin
Jeanne D. Teague
Northwest District
Mary A. Frantz
Edward R. Knisley
Patrick H. Mechem
Marna J. Montoure
Lynne E. Scarper
South Central District
Marian A. Fink
Susan K. Higgins
Beverly S. Kelso
Kaye A. Lee
Carolyn J. Mobley
Janet L. Parker
Janice A. Skaggs
R.A. Webber
Southeast District
Andy T. Sidden
Southwest District
Christen K. Chew
Lorane M. Dick

Many Register for Conference

Insight and excitement will be offered by the Leadership and Department of People of Color (DPOC) Conferences Aug. 25-30 in Phoenix, AZ.

More than 100 people have pre-registered for the Leadership Conference featuring church growth expert Lyle Schaller, and 60 for the DPOC Conference featuring Methodist Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly. On-site registration will also be available.

For more information, contact UFMCC headquarters, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd. #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. (213) 464-5100. ❐

Music Conference Set

"Sing a New Song," the first gay and lesbian Christian music conference in history, will be held Aug. 14-16 at the Southland Center Hotel in Dallas, TX.

One hundred people have already registered for the conference, which features workshops on church music ministries for small, medium and large congregations. Special guests include Dr. Tim Seelig, director of Turtle Creek Chorale in Dallas, and contemporary Christian music artist Mr. Ken Medema.

Also participating in the conference are many musicians well known in UFMCC, including Ms. Marsha Stevens, HeartSong, and Vision.

On-site registration is $60, with rooms priced at $60 per night. For more information, contact Mr. David McCollough at Cathedral of Hope MCC in Dallas, (214) 526-6221. ❐

JEAN GRALLEY
FEELING DISCONNECTED FROM THE FELLOWSHIP? WHO ISN'T!
IT'S THE UNIVERSAL UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE!
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ANNOUNCES ITS LATEST OFFERING:
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LIFE-LIKE! LIFE-SIZE! AUDIAL!
• TROY ("DO YOU LOVE THE LORD? CAN'T HEEAR YOU")
• FREDA (SHE WAVES!)
• "VERY BERRY"
• NANCY (SEEMS TO GO INTO A TRANCE!!)
AND MORE!
GIVES THE ILLUSION YOU'RE BEING VISITED BY A DIFFERENT FELLOWSHIP PERSONALITY EVERY SERVICE OF THE WEEK— AND THEY ALWAYS LOVE IT! (SOON: DISTRICT COORDINATORS!)
SAMARITAN— MEETING YOUR NEEDS.

Churches in Argentina Protest

ICM Buenos Aires, Argentina, made a public protest for gay and lesbian rights in June.

Rev. Roberto Gonzalez, pastor, reports that ICM Buenos Aires joined with seven other lesbian/gay rights groups to make a public protest on Gay and Lesbian Pride Day.

The church also participated in a "great protest" June 11, when Monseigneur Antonio Quarracino, Primate Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, joined the churches of Argentina at a service marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. "This cardinal and his church are responsible for the transgression of all the human rights of the gay/lesbian persons of our country," Rev. Gonzalez said.

In a letter to churches in Argentina, Rev. Gonzalez and Sr. Norberto D'Amico of ICM Buenos Aires point out that Monseignor Quarracino did nothing to question the article "Permission to Kill" by Father J.M. Lombardero. The article appeared in the July 1991 issue of *Antena*. Lombardero wrote, "What God forbids is to murder, to kill unjustly. But there are cases in which we even have the duty to kill. The case of homosexuals is one of these..." ❐

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Mr. Ravi Verma, Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

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Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

Around The Fellowship

Praises

Once again, the state of Delaware has a Metropolitan Community Church. **MCC Rehoboth Beach**, DE, became an official parish extension of **MCC Washington**, DC, on July 19. **Rev. Candace Shultis**, associate pastor of MCC-DC, noted that Rehoboth means "God has made a place for us."

MCC Washington, DC, has completed its $900,000 bond campaign and plans to move into its new building in September.

Two new works have been approved by the **Gulf Lower Atlantic District Committee**: **MCC Christ Covenant**, Stone Mountain, GA, and **MCC Columbus**, GA.

Rev. Jim Becker, pastor of **MCC of the Gulfcoast**, Biloxi, MS, has been appointed to do AIDS-related work with the United Church of Christ's Back Bay Mission. A press release from the mission proclaims, "The Back Bay Mission recognized Rev. Becker's ministry to MCC of the Gulfcoast and affirms that work." ❐

Prayers

Rev. Wayne Gollihar of **MCC Johnson County** in Lenexa, KS, was hospitalized in July due to AIDS.

Rev. Christine Oscar, pastor of **St. Mary's MCC**, Greensboro, NC, is recuperating well after a recent hospitalization. ❐

Transitions

MCC Augusta, GA, affirmed **Ms. Debbie Rutledge** as new pastoral leader June 21.

MCC Amarillo, TX, installs **Rev. Robert Finch** as pastor Aug. 15-16. ❐

Positions Available

First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, KS, is seeking a full-time pastor. For more information, contact Pastoral Search Committee, c/o First MCC of Kansas, 156 S. Kansas Avenue, Wichita, KS 67211.

MCC Montgomery, AL, is seeking a part-time pastor. For more information, contact MCC Montgomery, P.O. Box 603, Montgomery, AL 36107. Phone (205) 264-7887. ❐

Excel International Teams Gather

American University in Washington, DC, was the site for the annual All Team Gathering of Excel International, June 19-21. Fourteen Teams were represented from the U.S. and England. The university proved to be an ideal setting for the work, worship, education and renewal of the Teams, as well as the Executive Committee and the executive director, Ms. Brenda Blizzard. Excel is a lay ministry offering Christian spiritual renewal weekends to UFMCC congregants.

Mr. Adam DeBaugh presented an excellent workshop entitled "The History of Laity" at the meeting of all the Team Representatives on Friday. On Saturday Mr. Ron Swanda used the Myers/Briggs personality test during his workshop.

During Friday's business meeting, the director presented the Teams with the seriousness of Excel International's financial condition. Excel receives $6325 from the Fellowship budget, all of which is used to pay the director's salary. All other operating expenses plus the remainder of the director's salary must come from Team support. In the past this has taken the form of a $5 assessment for each participant. After the director explained the need to have the funds necessary to continue operation, the Teams voted unanimously to increase the assessment and to tithe $200 per year to the program's budget. ❐

Top 20 Tithes - June 1992

1.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN $	2,408.85
2.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC, Ft Lauderdale, FL	US $	2,153.45
3.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		1,961.51
4.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		1,806.81
5.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,268.18
6.	First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, KS		1,194.30
7.	All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis, MN		1,075.15
8.	King of Peace MCC, St Petersburg, FL		1,002.31
9.	MCC Tampa, Tampa, FL		845.34
10.	River City MCC, Sacramento, CA		807.04
11.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		753.60
12.	Agape' MCC, Fort Worth, TX		738.65
13.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		659.70
14.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		570.88
15.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		569.28
16.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield, IL		528.88
17.	MCC Key West, Key West, FL		514.78
18.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		498.65
19.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		465.23
20.	MCC Louisville, Louisville, KY		411.23

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters by the 10th of the following month}

Top 20 Per Capita - June 1992

1.	MCC Hickory, Hickory, NC	US $	31.50
2.	MCC of the Living Faith, St Louis, MO		28.78
3.	MCC Santa Barbara Cty, Santa Barbara, CA		27.82
4.	Angel of Hope MCC, Green Bay, WI		27.13
5.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		25.05
6.	Church of the Resurrection MCC, Chicago, IL		25.00
7.	MCC in the Country, Spring Valley, CA		23.49
8.	MCC Shepherd of the Plains, Great Falls, MT		23.16
9.	MCC of the Gentle Shepherd, Vancouver, WA		22.89
10.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield, IL		22.04
11.	MCC Living Spring, Eureka Springs, AR		21.97
12.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		21.94
13.	Christ the Redeemer MCC, Evanston, IL		21.75
14.	Pikes Peak MCC, Colorado Springs, CO		21.06
15.	Calvary MCC, Redwood City, CA		20.90
16.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		20.44
17.	Open Door MCC, Rockville, MD		19.83
18.	Open Arms Community Church, Santa Rosa, CA		19.17
19.	Eternal Light MCC, Olympia, WA		19.10
20.	Church With A Vision MCC, Longview, TX		18.84

Highlights of Lesbian/Gay Pride

Countless UFMCC churches around the world held special services and other events in June to celebrate lesbian and gay pride and freedom.

These activities honor the anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969 when gay men and lesbians resisted police harrassment at the Stonewall bar in New York City, NY.

Here are just a few highlights from around the Fellowship:

Resisting Evangelical Wrath in England

The first ever Lesbian and Gay Pride festival in Brighton, England was a success, even though evangelical Christians across the county of East Sussex prayed and fasted to invoke God's wrath on it.

The evangelicals especially targetted the May 24 Gay Pride service arranged by Whosoever MCC of Brighton and Hove.

"Despite the prayers and fasting of local evangelicals, God has seen fit to truly bless our efforts," said Rev. David Miller, pastor.

The service included a rite of blessing on the relationships of lesbian and gay couples. Many in the congregation had never been to an MCC service before.

"A number of lesbian and gay people are now keen to get involved in MCC," Rev. Miller said. "Many said they just did not realize that 'Church' could be so much fun."

A First For Windsor, Canada

Nine members and friends of MCC Windsor, Ontario, Canada, including their pastor, Rev. Don McRae, joined 20 others from Windsor's lesbian and gay community at City Hall as the City Council voted in favor of proclaiming July 12, 1992, as Windsor's first-ever Lesbian/Gay Pride Day. It is fitting that the day's first event was morning worship at MCC.

Ecumenical Pride in Georgia, USA

Full ecumenical participation, with a very noticable MCC presence, marked the Gay and Lesbian Pride Service June 23 at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Atlanta, GA.

The message was delivered by a Roman Catholic nun. "This feels good," she said when she stepped up to the pulpit.

When objections to the pride service were voiced by some members of the Shrine, the archbishop of the diocese declined to cancel the service.

HeartSong in the US Capital

HeartSong, a full-time traveling evangelistic ministry from the Cathedral of Hope MCC in Dallas, TX, was featured at Lesbian and Gay Pride festivities in Washington, DC.

Ms. Carol McClelland, of MCC of the Disciples in Washington, was the Pride Coordinator and Ms. Deb Bopp, member at MCC of the Disciples, served as Pride President.

This year's celebration marked many firsts for Pride in Washington. Ms. Bopp served as the first woman president of Pride there. This was the first time Christian performers were featured as headline entertainers. A first-ever AIDS vigil was held in conjunction with Pride and for the first time in the history of Washington Pride, the attendance at the Pride Rally totaled nearly 30,000 people.

HeartSong was featured at a benefit concert on Friday, participated in the AIDS vigil on Saturday, and on Sunday rode in the parade with Miss Gay Pride and Mr. Powerhouse, then was one of three featured entertainers at the rally.

Members of HeartSong are Mr. Keith Lasley, Mr. Chuck Vickers, Mr. Craig Culver, Mr. Phil Griffin and Mr. Larry Schoon. Mr. Bob Lacota is stage manager. ❐

***A Spanish-language worship service** has begun at MCC Los Angeles, CA. Some of the worshippers are pictured above. "We trust that the Holy Spirit will give us strength to grow as a Latin family of Christ," said Ms. Sharon Smith, who coordinates the service with Rev. Jose Marcos Gonzalez. Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson is pastor of the church.*

Freedom Rally

(continued from page 1)

The Texas Gay Veterans Association marched into the room with flags and banners, and Rev. Dusty Pruitt, UFMCC pastor who has sued the U.S. military for discrimination against lesbians and gays and who has won her first bout in court, was ushered to the stage. Over 1,000 people attended. Joyous music was provided by a 100-voice choir made up of members of the metroplex churches. Music evangelists Rev. Delores Berry and Ms. Marsha Stevens rounded out the program. All the Texas clergy in attendance were introduced by the district coordinator, Mr. Clarke Friesen. Mr. Chris Luna, deputy mayor of Dallas, welcomed Rev. Perry to Dallas.

Rev. Perry spoke and challenged the audience not to fear society's condemnation of the lesbian and gay community, but to dedicate themselves to freedom — the freedom just to be the person God has called them to be.

One person who attended the Rally, Mr. Phil Johnson, secretary treasurer of the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Historic Archives, described his feelings about the Rally this way in a letter to the Fellowship:

"What we are seeing today is just the start of a gay and lesbian culture.

"When I joined 'the movement,' if you wanted to call it that, in January, 1953 — 16 years before Troy Perry founded the world's first gay church — we said, 'yes, hopefully someday gays and lesbians will stand united and proud, but we'll not see it in our lifetimes.'

"...We never dreamed — never, never, never in our wildest fantasies — dared to dream that someday we would see what we take for granted today!

"And how did it come about? Well, MCC played a very big part in its development, I'll tell you that..."

Pastors are reporting from the metroplex area that the enthusiasm generated by the Rally has been taken back into their local churches and their churches are doing follow-up on the 10% of the individuals who filled out cards and said they had never attended an MCC service.

The next Rally that Rev. Perry is preparing will be held in Fort Lauderdale, FL in May 1993. ❐